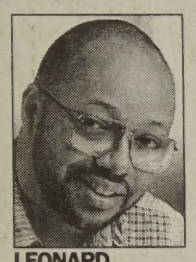
COMMENTARY

Same-sex marriage: Is it time?

A Hawaii court recently upheld same-sex marriage, pending further appeal. The issue has touched a national nerve. Should marriage licenses be reserved only for heterosexuals? Why or why not? How, if at all, should society recognize same-sex couples?

'Friends' do gays no favors



LEONARD PITTS JR.

Wait awhile. Hold off. This is a bad time.

In 1963, that was the prevailing sentiment of white liberal allies — "friends of the Negro," as they were known then — as the civil rights movement prepared for its defining moment in Birmingham, Ala. From Attorney General Robert Kennedy on down, they wrung their hands and pleaded for delay. Change was coming, they said, the Negro would get his justice, but he was pushing too fast.

Martin Luther King called those people a greater stumbling block than all the cross-burners and segregationists. These "friends," said King, valued order more than justice and paternalistically presumed to set the timetable for the freedom of others. "Shallow understanding from people of good will," wrote King, "is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will."

I find those words instructive in light of the recent ruling from a Hawaiian court affirming the right of gay people in that state to marry, pending appeal. It occurs to me that perhaps I have been a "friend of the homosexual." That is, less the true friend I ought to be than a go-slow, be-cautious, I'm-on-your-side-but voice of prudence. A human speed bump on the road to progress.

Meaning that for the better part of a year, I've struggled to cobble together a coherent opinion on the issue of same-sex marriages. Frankly, the idea made me uncomfortable.

Gays in the military? Yes. Gays as parents? Certainly. But marriage? As in . . . marriage? For some reason, that one gave me pause.

Problem was, I couldn't think of a single solid argument against it.

So I was left instead with a nagging unease, the inability to stand confidently in favor or say a definitive no. I felt dispassionate logic warring with unguarded emotion, and it made me wish gay people would just learn patience, slow down, realize that maybe now is not the time.

Funny thing about time, said King. People act as if it alone can bring transformation. "Change will come in time," we are fond of saying. But time, he argued, is neutral. It is human beings who must make the change.

Will plaintiffs Ninia Baehr, left, and Genora Dancel someday be allowed to marry?

I know some people resent comparisons between the civil and gay rights movements. Or for that matter, comparisons between the civil rights movement and any other freedom campaign. And not without reason. The dynamics that drove African America's struggle were, after all, unique.

But I believe there is a useful parallel to be drawn here for gay people:

Sometimes, your best friends can be your worst enemies. Sometimes, those who support you can undermine or even negate that support by their weakness of knees. Sometimes, moving ahead means leaving even your allies behind.

I don't mean to suggest that gay America shun straight supporters or that every disagreement about tactic, tone or objective is a sign of paternalism or tepidity. A wise person picks fights carefully.

But sometimes, the only reason not to fight is fear, unease, a vague sense that the time is not right or that change is coming too fast. We fail to understand that change always comes too fast, which is why it always scares us.

So I'm pleased by what happened in Hawaii. More, I admire the crusaders of gay America for the fact that it happened not just in the face of opposition from enemies, but also of ambivalence from friends. It speaks well of gay courage, pride and determination to be fully free.

All of which will be severely tested in the days ahead. The issue of same-sex marriage is likely to go to Hawaii's Supreme Court. I wouldn't be surprised to see it wind up in the federal court system after that. The cynically named Defense of Marriage Act that recently passed Congress gives other states the right not to recognize a same-sex marriage performed in Hawaii.

That would seem to be baldly unconstitutional, but the legal issues are tricky and no one knows how they will play themselves out. Gay people could be standing on the threshold of a historic victory — or a humiliating setback. Either way it goes, I have learned something valuable here about who I am and where I stand.

It's quite simple, really. I stand with my friends.

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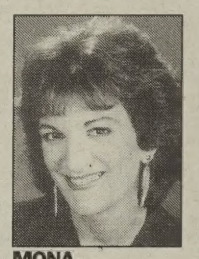
Tolerance shouldn't take place of traditional family



MONA CHAREN

If you think of the forces of cultural liberalism as an army, fighting on several fronts, their success becomes easier to understand.

The principal objective of the cultural crusaders today is to win societal acceptance for homosexuality as the moral equivalent of traditional male/female unions. This is not an objective that can be achieved by frontal attack. The cultural liberals, a minority of the population, cannot hope to obtain their goals through, for example, the legislative process.

The courts are friendlier terrain. A few well-placed judges — who went to the same schools as the cultural liberals and share their inclinations — can bypass the legislative process altogether. By "finding" a "right" to gay marriage in, for example, the Hawaii state constitution, a judge can make policy by diktat. It ain't democratic. But modern liberals are concerned with results, not proper process.

So let's call the judges the commandos of this army, creating facts on the ground.

There is also a resourceful propaganda corps. While the commandos are forcing an unwelcome reality upon us, the propaganda corps is teaching us to love it.

A recent Newsweek cover story displays a lesbian couple with the headline "We're Having a Baby: Can Gay Families Gain Acceptance?" You don't really need to read the story to guess the tone. What stands in the way of happiness for Brian and Bernie, Marilyn and Angela, Melissa and Julie — and their children? Why nothing but prejudice and bigotry. Newsweek even offered a map of the United States, with each state coded as "highly tolerant, tolerant, varying tolerance, intolerant and highly intolerant."

Do you hear an echo? Is it perhaps the reasoning in Romer vs. Evans, the Supreme Court case holding that a Colorado statute withholding special rights from homosexuals was unconstitutional because it was based on anti-gay bias? See how the many divisions of the army work together?

Well, we all just know that intolerance is terrible, don't we? It's the civil rights paradigm. Intolerance is what kept black Americans down for so many years. So all forms of intolerance are benighted and wicked and must be eliminated.

Or is intolerance of certain things desirable? For many years, we were intolerant of illegitimacy, and the percentage of out-of-wedlock babies remained fixed in single digits. Within the past several decades, we've become much more tolerant of premarital sex and unwed childbearing, and we've seen the percentage of illegitimate babies skyrocket to 33 percent.

For many years, we were intolerant of criminal behavior, and you could safely walk the streets of large cities. But during the past several decades, we've become more tolerant of criminality, telling ourselves that criminals can't help themselves and that crime is a natural and understandable consequence of poverty (then why didn't crime rise during the Great Depression?), and now we live in fear, "tolerating" the fact that in some neighborhoods children dodge bullets as they walk to school.

But let's be clear, we are being urged not just to tolerate homosexuality but to vindicate it. We are being asked to remove all of the remaining stigmas and legal distinctions. Cultural liberals want a world in which the phrase "She's getting married" will have to be followed by the question "To a man or a woman?"

This is, in Charles Krauthammer's phrase, "defining deviancy up." Homosexuality is not like race. Permitting large numbers of children to be raised by homosexual couples is just asking for misery.

A homosexual father in the Newsweek piece explains that his adopted 17-month-old daughter is "lucky to have the opportunity to be different." Most children would rather be boiled in oil than be different, even in small ways. To ask them to be different in such a fundamental way is to ask too much. Being a parent means subordinating many of one's own needs and wishes to one's children.

Everything we know about human development points to one conclusion: Children do best when raised by two parents (male and female). Whatever parents do to compromise that possibility for their children — fail to marry, divorce or take a homosexual lover — is destructive. That is a fact of human nature speaking, not "intolerance."

Charen was a White House aide in the Reagan administration. Write her in care of Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045 (e-mail: cre8ors@aol.com).

go! TODAY

BEST BETS

ARTWORK BY THE RICH AND FAMOUS: "Image Makers Rock 'N' Roll Expo," works by David Bowie, Bob Dylan, Yoko Ono, Jerry Garcia and others. 7 a.m.-8 p.m. today and Thursday, 7 a.m.-7 p.m. Saturday and 7 a.m.-6 p.m. Sunday. Wildcat Motorsports, 1746 S. Academy Blvd., 574-9228.

VARIETY SHOW: "Christmas is For Sharing," and you'll be entertained while you do it. Jazz musician Jerry Brown has gathered entertainers for a show to benefit abused women and children. Castaways Restaurant, 7:30 p.m., 107 Manitou Ave. $7 show, $14.95 with dinner, reservations required; 685-5626.

Rimes meets true-blue fans

MUSIC NEWS

Cadets do lunch with young country star

By **Ovetta Sampson**
Gazette Telegraph

Matt Quatrara was the big man on campus Tuesday. The senior Air Force Academy cadet had the distinct pleasure of escorting country-music sensation LeAnn Rimes to lunch, around the school's grounds and pretty much anywhere she wanted to go.

"It's just really interesting to meet somebody who has this kind of star quality," Quatrara said, trying to be diplomatic but smiling profusely. "I am so impressed with her."

It's not difficult to be impressed by a blond beauty who acts more like a mature woman than the 14-year-old she is.

Rimes

Rimes, who ate a quick lunch with hundreds of cadets before her concert Tuesday night at the academy, is one of the youngest singers to ever have a hit on the Billboard's Country Charts. The teen-ager has one of the fastest growing careers in a music genre that's having a spurt of its own.

At times she finds it all overwhelming and considers herself fortunate to have all that success.

"The country music business is very hard," she said before lunch. "I'm very lucky to be doing everything that I'm doing."

The young star began her career on stage at age 5, when she won her first song and dance competition. But at the ripe old age of 11, she broke free of the local opry shows in Dallas and hit the big time. That's when she recorded her first song, "Blue," for an independent label.

A Nashville record executive heard the song and her career was off and running.

"Blue" hit No. 1 on the country chart in August, and Rimes has never looked back.

"This is something that I've been wanting to do since I was 5," she said. "I can't believe it. I haven't even had time to sit down and think about all the things that have happened to me."

She hasn't even had time to go to school. She's being home schooled while she watches her stardom explode.

Rimes' first album, released earlier this year, already has two major country hits. Her second release, "One Way Ticket (Because I Can)," also has soared, landing at No. 4 on the country Billboard chart this week.

Her album is close to going triple platinum (3 million copies sold), she was the opening act at this year's Country Music Awards, and next year she'll tour with super-hot country singer Reba McEntire.

All this fame in such a short time could give anybody the willies. But Rimes credits her parents and her band for providing such a good support system.

'Primetime Live' wins tight race for ABC

NIELSENS

Associated Press

Buoyed by a Barbara Walters special and Diane Sawyer's interview with actor Robert Downey Jr. on "Primetime Live," ABC won an extraordinarily tight race in Nielsen Media Research's ratings this week.

Many of the major networks turned to holiday specials or reruns following the crucial November "sweeps" period. ABC's tally was the lowest rating to win during the 12-week television season, Nielsen said.

Still, slumping ABC will take the win.

Despite being reruns, NBC's "Seinfeld" and "ER" were the week's top-rated shows.

1. "Seinfeld," NBC
2. "ER," NBC
3. "CBS Sunday Movie: Mrs. Santa Claus"
3. "Men Behaving Badly," NBC
5. "Home Improvement," ABC
6. "Friends," NBC
7. "Barbara Walters Special," ABC
8. "Sears Family Theater: Home Alone 2," Fox
9. "NFL Monday Night Football," ABC
10. "NYPD Blue," ABC
11. "60 Minutes," CBS
12. "Touched by an Angel," CBS
13. 'Suddenly Susan," NBC
14. "Drew Carey Show," ABC
15. "Caroline in the City," NBC
15. "Frasier," NBC
17. "Cosby," CBS
18. "Ellen," ABC
18. "PrimeTime Live," ABC
18. "Spin City," ABC
21. "Dateline NBC," (Tuesday)
21. "Walker, Texas Ranger," CBS
23. "Murphy Brown," CBS
23. "NBC Sunday Night Movie: Greedy,"
23. "X-Files," Fox
26. "Grace Under Fire," ABC
27. "Cybill," CBS
28. "Mad About You," NBC
29. "Early Edition," CBS
30. "Ink," CBS
30. "NBC Monday Night Movies: The Prosecutor"
30. "Roseanne," ABC
33. "3rd Rock From The Sun," NBC
34. "Life's Work," ABC
34. "Turning Point," ABC
36. "Something So Right," NBC
37. "20/20," ABC
37. "Dr. Quinn Medicine Women," CBS
39. "Sabrina the Teen-Aged Witch," ABC
40. "Family Matters," ABC
40. "Townies," ABC
42. "Melrose Place," Fox
43. "Frosty Returns," CBS
43. "Frosty The Snowman," CBS
43. "Winnie The Pooh Christmas," CBS
46. "CBS Wednesday Movie: 'A Child Is Missing' "
46. "Homicide: Life On The Street," NBC
48. "ABC Sunday Night Movie: 'Passenger 57,' "
48. "CBS Sunday Night Movie: 'Gone In A Heartbeat' "
48. "Dateline NBC," (Friday)
52. "Billboard Music Awards," Fox
52. "Images Of Life," CBS
54. "Boston Common," NBC
55. "Beauty And The Beast," CBS
56. "Story Of Santa Claus," CBS
57. "Promised Land," CBS
57. "Unsolved Mysteries," NBC
57. "World's Funniest Outtakes," Fox
60. "America's Funniest Home Videos," ABC
61. "Fox Tuesday Movie: Code Name: Wolverine," Fox
62. "Millennium," Fox
63. "Wings," NBC
64. "Jeff Foxworthy," NBC
65. "SEC Championship," ABC
66. "Newsradio Special," NBC
67. "Dateline NBC (Saturday)"
67. "Mr. Rhodes," NBC
69. "High Incident," ABC
69. "Nash Bridges," CBS
71. "America's Funniest Home Videos"

PRIMETIME

"PARTY OF FIVE" . . . The pangs and joys; the exhilerations and pain; the exultations and betrayals of young love are consistently and keenly observed in this show (8 p.m., Fox).

"KATHIE LEE: JUST IN TIME FOR CHRISTMAS" . . . Gifford hosts her annual holiday special (8 p.m., CBS) which celebrates the joys of cohabiting with Frank, Cassidy, Cody and the Divinity.

"SAMSON AND DELILAH" . . . The conclusion airs at 6 and 8 p.m. on TNT.

"COACH" . . . The series returns with an episode in which Howard plans a huge televised halftime wedding for Luther and Doris during the Breakers-49ers game (7:30 p.m., ABC).

"A PINKY & THE BRAIN CHRISTMAS" . . . In this animated special (7:30 p.m., Channel 2 IND), the friends create a mind-manipulating doll.

"CANDID CAMERA'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY HOLIDAY EDITION" . . . The show features yuletide-themed practical jokes (9 p.m., CBS).

"PRIMETIME LIVE" . . . Scheduled reports: A scandal involving Prudential Insurance; how sexual content on television affects children; pickpockets; magician David Copperfield

EVENING

MOVIES SPORTS NEWS

CE	6 PM	6:30	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM	11:30
2 2 IND	Home Improvement ∩ (CC)	Home Improvement ∩ (CC)	Sister, Sister "Christmas" (R) ∩ (CC)	Pinky & the Brain (R) ∩ (CC)	Wayans Bros. "Psycho Santa" (CC)	Jamie Foxx (R) ∩ (CC)	News		Star Trek: Deep Space Nine A difficult assignment forces Kira to evaluate her priorities. (CC)		Martin "A Woman With a Past" (CC)	Bzzz! ∩
4 4 CBS	CBS Evening News (CC)	News (CC)	Nanny ∩ (CC)	Pearl "The Tutor" ∩ (CC)	Kathie Lee: Just in Time for Christmas ∩ (CC)		Candid Camera's 50th Anniversary Holiday Edition (CC)		News (CC)	(10:35) Late Show ∩ (CC)		Late Late Show (CC)
5 5 NBC	Wings "Wingless" Cord has a case of the nerves. (CC)	Newsradio "President" Mr. James runs for president. (R) (CC)	Newsradio "Stocks" Beth learns about stock options. ∩ (CC)	Men Behaving Badly "Road Trip" The guys fantasize. ∩ (CC)	Law & Order "Atonement" A limo driver-drug courier is suspected of killing a model. (R) ∩ (CC)		Hard Copy Christmas gifts to avoid. (CC)	Entertainment Tonight Actor Harrison Ford. ∩ (CC)	News	(10:35) Tonight Show Actors Kelly Preston and Chris O'Donnell, singer Lyle Lovett. ∩ (CC)		(11:37) Late Night ∩ (CC)
6 6 PBS	Newshour With Jim Lehrer (CC)		(7:05) Klondike & Snow "A Tale of Twin Polar Bears" (R) ∩ (CC)		(8:10) Family Encore Favorites of the pledge festival.				One Foot in the Grave	Are You Being Served? "No Sale"	Charlie Rose "Frontiers of Medicine." (R) ∩	
7 ABC	Jeopardy! (CC)	Wheel of Fortune (CC)	Grace Under Fire ∩ (CC)	Coach "In the Money" (CC)	Drew Carey (R) ∩ (CC)	Ellen (R) ∩ (CC)	Primetime Live (CC)		News (CC)	(10:35) Nightline (CC)	(11:05) Inside Edition (CC)	American Journal (CC)
8 8 PBS	Newshour With Jim Lehrer (CC)		Songs of the Homeland ∩ (CC)			Great Performances: Linda Ronstadt's Canciones	(9:45) Boleros! Unforgettable Love Songs ∩			Nightly Business Report	Newshour With Jim Lehrer (Left in Progress) (CC)	
9 9 NBC	News (CC)	Entertainment Tonight (CC)	Wings "Wingless" (CC)	Newsradio (R) ∩ (CC)	Newsradio ∩ (CC)	Men Behaving Badly (CC)	Law & Order "Atonement" (R) ∩ (CC)		News (CC)	(10:35) Tonight Show ∩ (CC)		(11:37) Cheers ∩ (CC)
11 10 CBS	Wheel of Fortune (CC)	Jeopardy! (CC)	Nanny "The Car Show" Fran enters a beauty contest. ∩ (CC)	Pearl "The Tutor" Pearl meets with a 9-year-old adviser. (CC)	Kathie Lee: Just in Time for Christmas ∩ (CC)		Candid Camera's 50th Anniversary Holiday Edition ∩ (CC)		News	(10:35) Late Show Actors Kenneth Branagh and Bonnie Hunt, music group Counting Crows. ∩ (CC)		(11:37) Married... With Children A shoe documentary. (CC)
13 12 ABC	Mad About You Paul and Jamie hire a maid. ∩ (CC)	Coach Kelly wants to work in New York. ∩ (CC)	Grace Under Fire ∩ (CC)	Coach "In the Money" Luther and Doris decide to get married. (CC)	Drew Carey Drew hires a bully to replace Mimi. (R) ∩ (CC)	Ellen Ellen sells the bookstore. (R) ∩ (CC)	Primetime Live The scandal at Prudential Life Insurance. (CC)		News	(10:35) Seinfeld Friend's gift giving is suspicious. ∩ (CC)	(11:05) Nightline (CC)	(11:35) Real TV Thief locked inside a store. (CC)
21 3 FOX	Home Improvement Problems with relatives. ∩ (CC)	Simpsons Homer reveals he was a pop star. ∩ (CC)	Beverly Hills, 90210 "Judgement Day" The university charges Brandon with plagiarism; Mark feels jealous. ∩ (CC)		Party of Five "Desperate Measures" Charlie persuades Kirsten to return home; Bailey makes a confession. ∩ (CC)		Extreme Blue Two professional surfers fight crime as undercover agents for the U.S. Customs Department. ∩ (CC)		Baywatch "Home Cort" A modern-day renaissance man and lifeguard, J.D. Cort, arrives in style. ∩		Dating Game ∩	Newlywed Game ∩
43 TBN	Behind the Scenes	Crefio A. Dollar Jr.	Precious Memories	Jack Van Impe	Praise the Lord				Jerry Savelle	Jesse Duplantis	Full Gospel Business Men	Benny Hinn
51 KWHD	Inside Sports				Healthy Choices Telethon				Bob Enyart		Richard Roberts	Healthy Telethon
68 23 PBS	(5:00) Gipsy Kings: Tierra Gitana ∩ (CC)		Songs of the Homeland ∩ (CC)			Great Performances "Linda Ronstadt's Canciones de Mi Padre" Mexican love songs. ∩				World News	(11:10) Issues USA	(11:40) TechnoPolitics
A&E 30	Biography "Gary Gilmore"		American Justice "Death Penalty" Caryl Chessman, Gary Gilmore and life on death row. (R)		20th Century The Rodney King case, which put the spotlight on police brutality.		Law & Order "Rage" (CC)		Biography "Gary Gilmore" (R)		American Justice "Death Penalty" Caryl Chessman, Gary Gilmore and life on death row. (R)	
AMC 45	Remember WENN "Don't Act Like That"	Movie: ★★★ "The Road to Morocco" (1942, Comedy) Bing Crosby, Bob Hope. A sailor is sold to a Moroccan slave trader. (CC)			Movie: ★★★ "From the Terrace" (1960, Drama) Paul Newman, Joanne Woodward, Myrna Loy. A man's marriage crumbles during his quest for success.				Movie: ★★★ "The Road to Morocco" (1942, Comedy) Bing Crosby, Bob Hope. A sailor is sold to a Moroccan slave trader. (CC)			
BET 33	UnReal				Comicview		Talk	Benson	Rap City			
BRAV 44	Movie: ★★★½ "Local Hero" (1983, Comedy) Peter Riegert. A would-be mogul tries to secure a Scottish village's land.				Inside the Actors Studio Dennis Hopper. (R)		Movie: ★★★½ "A Matter of Life and Death" (1946) David Niven. An RAF pilot is saved from death by a twist of fate.				Expose "Naked Hollywood" "The Star" (R) (Part 1 of 5)	
CNN 24	News (CC)	Politics (CC)	Larry King Live (CC)		American Edge "Frontiers"		Sports (CC)	Moneyline (R)	NewsNight	Showbiz	NewsNight	Sports (CC)
COM 64	Absolutely	Tracey Ullman	Tick (CC)	Dr. Katz Pro.	Hollywood Hockey Cup		Daily Show	TV Nation	Saturday Night Live (CC)		Dream On	Daily Show (R)
DISC 29	Travelers "Fiestas Patronales de Loiza: Puerto Rico" (R)		Go for It! (R)		Cyberlife Holiday Buyer's Guide (R)		Wild Discovery "Forest of Fear" (R)		Discover Magazine "Poison"		Fangs! "Queen of the Beasts" (R)	
E! 27	O.J. Civil Trial		Melrose Place ∩		Talk Soup (R)	Night Stand	Howard Stern	Howard Stern	Melrose Place ∩		Talk Soup (R)	Night Stand
ESPN 14	(5:30) College Basketball Michigan at St. John's. (Live)		College Basketball George Washington at Kansas. (Live)					Sportscenter (CC)		Waikiki King's Race Triathlon	American Muscle	Racehorse Digest (R)
ESPN2 37	College Basketball		Strongest Man	Strongest Man	Strongest Man	NHL Hockey Pittsburgh Penguins at Mighty Ducks of Anaheim. (Subject to Blackout) (Live)						NHL 2Night
FAM 31	Noel (R)	Santa-Fairies	Bugs Bunny	Drummer Boy	'Twas Night	Yes, Virginia	Home & Family Christmas ∩		Rescue 911 ∩ (CC)		700 Club (Left in Progress)	
FOXR 16	FOX Sports News		FOX Sports News		NHL Hockey Colorado Avalanche at Vancouver Canucks. From General Motors Place. (Live)						FOX Sports News	
HIST 68	Four Years of Thunder (R)		True Action Adventures		Weapons at War (R)		Year by Year "1938" (R)		Four Years of Thunder (R)		True Action Adventures (R)	
LIFE 48	Unsolved Mysteries ∩		Movie: "A Different Kind of Christmas" (1996) Shelley Long. A prominent attorney's father believes he is Santa Claus. (CC)				Martha Stewart (CC)	Unsolved Mysteries ∩	Unsolved Mysteries ∩		Nurses	Thirtysomething (CC)
MTV 35	Unplugged	George M.	Unplugged ∩		RealWrld	Beavis-Butthd	Idiot Savants	Singled Out	Loveline ∩		Alternative Nation ∩	
NICK 32	Hey Arnold! ∩	Happy Days	I Love Lucy (CC)	Munsters	Mary Tyler Moore (CC)	Rhoda	Taxi (CC)	Odd Couple (CC)	Bewitched (Part 1 of 2)	I Dream of Jeannie	Dick Van Dyke "The Twizzle"	Bob Newhart
ODSY 51	Our House						Heroes of the Heart (R)		Our House		Family Theatre	Brooklyn Brid